[Now First Published.]

A MODERN TIMON.

A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

BY HAMILTON AIDE.

Author of "Passages from the Life of a Lady," "CARR OF CARRLYON." "POET AND PEER," ETC.

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In looking back to the many strange characters I have met in my intercourse with men of all countries, during a diversified journey through life, I can recall none more singular than the person I shall name Sigismund, whose acquaintance I made in Cairo, four years ago. In what this singularity consisted, and how it fashioned his career, will be apparent when I transcribe portions of conversations which I had with him occasionally during the short time we were together. But, in order that those who are at the trouble to read these pages may form some picture of the man, physically, I will describe the effect he produced upon me the first time

It was in a low cafe, where I had been drawn from the street by curiosity to watch-rather than listen to-a recitation, half song, half poem, accompanied by a monstrous twanging and scraping of instruments, the chief performer being a humorous fellow, whose facial expression and gestures evinced a dramatic capacity which had its reward in the low gurgie of laughter and the frequent applause wherewith his parrative was greeted.

It was a curious sight-that mass of tarbouches and turbans, with the upturned olive faces beneath them, the dim light from a single oil lamp flashing now and again on their white teeth and gleaming | to their contents. eyes, the fiery ends of the cigarettes each man held between his lips burning like so many stars through the thick atmosphere of he sat beside me. He was a fair man, inclining to reduces; his hair closely cropped, his mustache long and busby; his face otherwise clean shaved. In repose, his fine profile and stone-blue eyes—which, I found later, became like blue diamonds when he was excited-his curious bitter-sweetsmile, exploding into a thunderous laugh, now and again, impressed me greatly, and reminded me of a certain portrait by Titian, in the Pitti Palace, full of wonderful possibilities-a portrait that has always aroused my curiosity. What manner of man was this? Evidently he understood every word that fell from the Arab tale-teller, and enjoyed it. Presently he drew a pencil from his pocket, and some letters, on the back of one of which he began hurriedly to sketch the head and action of the performer. In doing this my eye caught the word "Esquire" on the letter. It confirmed my sus-

"The first part of the tale ended just then-or it may have been one short tale, complete; and the applause was succeeded by a full. Some went out; but I saw my neighbor had no intention of moving. I turned to him and said:

"You follow this Arabic story perfe ly, sir! le it amusing!" He looked me full in the face and replied, "It is." "Nothing daunted, I said: "Would you

mind telling me what it is all about?" You would probably not understand if I did. There are things which none but an Eastern-or one who is almost an Eastern, can comprehend."

His tone was less churlish than his words, or I suppose this would have shut me up. He had thrown away the end of his eigarettee, and drew out his case as he "May I offer you one?" I held out my

own case. "They are very good. I comprenend a cigraette, if I cannot Arab wit." Again he looked at me, astonished, but less coidly. The thirst for tobacco was strong-stronger even than his desire to repulse an obtrusive stranger. He took the cigarette, and thanked me. You are not like most of your country-

men," he said, with the first gleam of a smile he had vouchsafed me. "Our countrymen, surely? You are English?"

"I belong to no country." "How is that?"

"I am more at home on the banks of the Tigris than on the Mississippi, or the Thames. I hate politics, white ties, and small talk. I travel all the year round, but abjure European cities and the haunts of fashionable folk. I live among the people. I am of the people, wherever I

"Up to a certain point I can understand this." I replied. "But do you never feel the want of congenial companionship?" "Never. People bore me-how they bore me!-with their platitudes and their con-ventionalities. Haliz and Firdusi are companionship enough for me. I prefer them

to Martin Farquhar Tupper."
I laughed. "It is easy to see you do not move with the age. The reign of platitude is past-the reign of paradox, of lawlessness, has begun. Everything is acceptable

now, but the accepted." "New-fangled philosophies have no inter-Kayam has forestalled them all." 'Personal contact with humanity is better than constantly poring over the utter-

ances of the wisest man that ever lived -even Shakspeare, who has more flesh and blood in him than all your old Persians." "You are beating the air like the preachers," he returned, with a smile. "I have plenty of contact with humanity- only it is not of your sort. I don't want to hear. second-hand, what the medern peddlers offer for sale, as new; still less do I care to listen to the talse enthusiasms, and explosive rubbish your traveling spinsters and unspeakable widows pour out to me,

when we meet at table d' hotes." "I give you up table d' hotes. But in cerwomen, too, who will give you-", I hesi-

"New lamps for old?" Here be laughed for the first time since he had conversed. "Well, I prefer the old, Mine, like Aladdm's, has a magical power the new don't possess. All these people, who have so little changed in thousands of years-I never tire of studying them. Their poetry, their written wisdom, interest me as noth-

ing else does." "Shall I tell you what I believe to be the secret of this? You have mastered their tongues, which comparatively few Europeans know. Excuse me. if I say that vanity has something to do with it. You feel as if you had a prescriptive right to their wisdom and poetry and you exalt the value of them, as we are apt to do things which are an exclusive possession.'

Perhaps a shade of annoyance crossed his face, but it was gone in a moment, as he care for no man's opinion; therefore how can vanity have anything to say to it? I tell you that in America and Europe everything has been said that can be said -it is all like a sucked orange. I find more juice and flavor in these Easterns than in all the Westerns put together, whose fash-

ions of thinking change like their clothes, Mahommetans are the only true conserva-"They are conservative of prejudice and rapacity," I said, bothy, "but if they were endowed with every virtue under the sun, that would not affect my argument. You must live, virtually alone, among people with whom-say what you will-you can have but little in common. What good can you do them, or they you? We are not put here to live for ourselves alone, or-"Idon't subscribe to that," he interrupted. "I live for myself-a purely selfish life, and I find it perfectly satisfactory.

want nothing from any man; neither do l give-except the miserable com I care nothing about. That which I do care about, my society, I am not prodigal of."
Here the story teller took up his parable again, and my new acquaintance turned towards him and gave the same amused stientien to the narrative he had previously done. When it was finished, and there was a general exodus, showing that the entertainment for the evening was over, I

"Heaven forbid! I am at an obscure Arab caravansary in the old quarter of Cairo." Then, suddenly, "Do you care to take it he generally now

European with whom he came in contact. and that he was amused, as well as amazed, to find a dry twig among the pliant grass resisting his scornful scythe. Not otherwise was this invitation explicable. I accepted it cordially, for he interested me, and we walked on for the best part of a mile, conversing till we reached a low archway, under which we passed, and I found myself in a large square court, surrounded on three sides by a narrow balcony. Two or three Arabs were seated on some matting, smoking and talking in the bright moonlight which fell on the side of the court where they sat, casting a black shadow slantwise from the other side. A door stood open there, through which I saw the

red-yellow flare of a lamp. We mounted

the wooden exterior staircase in an angle of the court, and Sigismund drew a key from his pocket and opened it. The room we entered was small, and in strange confusion. The bed was strewn with papers: MSS. in every stage of decomposition. The floor was covered with them; one of the two tables in the room was thickly piled with them, and with volumes in Persian and Arabic. On the other table were pipes, tobacco, a small mirror, some sheets of music and his toilet arrangements, which were of the simplest description. A bath was in one corner of the room, and some open portmanteaux, into which, as there was no wardrobe, his clothes were pitched. In another corner was some sort of guitar or mandolin. Several pencil sketches of figures were pinned against the wall; and upon a shelf above the bed was a row of flasks and phials, of every shape and size, all corked and all labeled. I was not long left in doubt as

He filled a pipe and offered it to me. At the same moment the doorway, through which the moonlight poured, was suddenthe room. There was but one European at | ly darkened by the form of an Arab in a peered in, with a salutation, and a few rapid words passed between the two-as it seemed to me, answers on the Arab's part to Sigismund's questions. The Arab indulged freely pantomime. He raised the palm of his right hand, cup like, to re-ceive his cheek, which he inclined into it, He imposed the other hand alternately upon his brow and his stomach, and Sigis-mund appeared satisfied. He took down two phials from the shelf, poured out a measured quantity from each, and handed the glass to the man, who with a profound salaam disappeared. "So these tellows come to you for medi-

cine, do they?" I said. "Yes. I am a doctor. At least I took out my diploma years ago, and used to put people out of their pain one way or another, for a guinea, as easily as the rest of them." "Have you quite given up your profes-

"I only practice on these poor devils. They have faith in me, and so-they are generally benefited." "Then what you said just now was not

"Very likely. I can lie as well as another-to support my views. But what do You do give something to others. You

don't live wholly for yourself."

Pooh! This is only selfishness—nothing else. I like doing it. It gives me no trouble, and it amuses me. They tell one another I am a magician, and before I've been in a place a week my door is besieged. But let us drop this. " Tell me if this sherbet isn't prime—just such stuff as inspired Hafiz and Omer."

He filled me a glass, and I drunk it off. should have preferred old port or sound claret; but for those who like a luscious wine it was, no doubt, excellent. Then I

"Tell me, if you do not mind, what you are writing-for you evidently are engaged on some big work?" "Only my journal-big enough in one sense-my journal all over the world; in places where no other European has ever

"That must be interesting. " * And of all the countries you have seen you prefer Egypt?"

"And Persia. Like Moore's sunflower (not the real one, by-the-by), my face is now turned resolutely to the God in the East. I don't trouble the West much." "When do you mean to publish your "Never."

"Never! What is the use of transcribing it then, as I see you are doing?" "If I live to be eighty, imbecile above, and paralyzed below, it may amuse me to live my wanderings over again. So it must be clearly written out. But why publish? What good would it do me? Fame?—I despise it. Money?—I have enough. No, I'm too wise to encounter unnecessary worries. I have attained to the upper Calm of my Persian poets, where the gusts and currents of ambition and vain desire are un-

known." "Hum! Whether your poets, with their 'eat-and-drink-for-to-morroy-you-die' philosophy floated superior to these currents. who shall say? One thing is clear. They est for me," he replied carelessly. "Omar | were not so transcendant as to refuse to give to the world what they wrote-or you

> We both laughed. "Perhaps that is what the world would be it I published. The overstock of foolish books shall not be increased by me."

We talked on for nearly an hour, and then I left him for my sumptuous Shepnerd's sleek pastures, where no sick Arabs penetrated the dormitories of the sheep (which he fleeged so closely); those poor "brevis de Panurge" blinking at the pyramids, in flocks, day after day, and braying their little chorns of correct approval, What a contrast to this racy and wrongheaded Sigismumd.

We became great friends; meeting daily during my stay in Cairo. It often struck me as odd that we should suit each other, our ideas on nearly all subjects of import being diametrically opposed. Perhaps it was on this account that he interested me. Self-proclaimed egotists rarely interest anyone; but it required no great dis-cernment to see that his egotism was only a thin crust, which, do what he would to harden it around him, might easily be pierced through, when occasion demanded. He often made me angry by his contempt for accidental civilization. Alas! poor fellow! I cannot help thinking now that had he seen more of it he might have been saved from committing a fatal error. I used to say that if the devil himself appeared with a fez on his head, Sigismund would greet him warmly. Me, however, without a fez, I am happy to remember, he always seemed glad to see. Though we wrangled over the great problems of lite. there were many things we had in common. In the flower-fields of music and poetry, the breath of the same sweet herbs appealed to each, and we knew, in interchanging thoughts, that we felt the beauty Besides an unusual capacity with his

of color and form in much the same way. pencil for seizing character and delineating action, he sang with great spirit and feeling snatches of song from all lands, which he had picked up, improvising an accom-paniment on the guitar, and, though untaught, he was never wrong in his harmontes. Like everything he did, his singing was original; not to be confounded with the ordinary baritone warbling of drawing rooms. You were not bound to like all that wild outlandish music, with its strange intervals and progressions, but certainly you. had never heard it before. I found great pleasure in listening to him and in listening with him to such music as the cafes and public bands afforded, where his taste and

discrimination seemed to me first rate. since it always agreed with mine. On one of these occasions—it was my last evening in Cairo for some weeks as I was going up to Wadi-Halfa the next day -we had dined together and had repaired to one of the best music halls, where a special entertainment was announced. The great attraction to most of the men present was the dancing of a young woman, said to be Circassian, and supposed to be beautiful. and I offered him another cigarette: "Are with the walls had been placarded for some with the walls had been placarded for some days, were meant to lead you to believe. This houri was clothed, apparently, in nothing but sequins, and had eyes like Caire." Then, suddenly, "Do you care to spoonsful of black currant jelly. She was supply 150 feet high, will furnish power come and smoke a narghile there before represented as possed upon her toes, with a enough to lift a bowlder of 1,000 pounds tambourine in her uplifted arms. Like all into the air and hold it there. A stream

see how far the artist had drawn upon his imagination for this picture.
Our little table with coffee was in the front row. A tolerable orchestra, and some rather excruciating French singing occu-

pied the first part of the evening. Then came the interinde - what was looked to as the gem of the evening, and just before which performance the hall became crowded. La belle Fatima stepped forward to dance her solo. I was agreea-bly surprised. Without all the henna, pearl powder and rouge the girl would have been an attractive creature. She was splendidly built, and moved well. Her attire, though permitting a great deal to be seen through clouds of spangled gauze, was not as indecent as many present had been led to hope. That the sequins played a prominent part in it, I am not prepared to deny. But, besides the spangled gauze which descended to her ankles (laden, as her arms were, with glittering bangles) she held a sleezy gold-woven scarf, which she wound round her body as she danced, then, like lightning, unwound and enveloped herself from head to foot in it. But it was not dancing; it was a swift, gliding movement - a quivering of the whole spangled frame, as that of a serpent, with a wonderful interlacing of the arms and twinkling of the feet, as she struck her tambourine now and againvoluptuous, but never indelicate in suggestion; without the offense, and with infinitely more grace than the contortions of the gawaze girls I had seen. The manner in which she flung her lithe body backwards, inflating the gold-threaded scarf, like a nautilus-shell, behind her, was memorable, and recalled to me a pose of a well-known dancer, whom she certainly had never seen. in one of these strange gyrations, which brought her close to the footlights of the raised stage, and consequently almost within an arm's length of us, by some means or other her glittering gauzes caught fire, and in an instant the girl was enveloped in flame. The whole ball rose with a roar of horror; but one man alone acted with promptitude. No one at the side wings had the courage or the presence of mind to come to the assistance of the poor, terrified creature, who ran shricking to and iro, literally a pillar of fire. But Sigismund, with one bound, had cleared the footlights, and flinging his heavy inverness cape over her, flung her to the ground. The flames were extinguished; in another minute it would have been too late to save her. He lifted the poor, scorched body in his arms, like a child, and carried her off the stage amid the plaudits of the

I ran round behind and joined him. He told the manager that he was a surgeon. and would attend to the girl. An old woman, who may have been her mother, for aught I know, and at all events played the part, ran in and out, wringing her hands and bellowing, till Sigismund sternly ordered her to hold her peace or leave the room. I, myself, remained in the adjoining room, while the girl was being examined, and her wounds tended. She was terribly burnt about the legs and body, but her face and arms were spared. She was quite tranquil, only half-conscious, I believe, from prostration. When he had administered some stimulant, and wrapped her from head to foot in cotton wool, Signsmund said she might be removed to her own dwelling. I helped him in the transit. We carried her in blankets to the squalid room, hard by, which was La Belle Fatima's temporary home, and then, finding I could be of no further use, and that Sigismund meant to remain with his patient all night, I left him.

The next morning I ran in to bid him good-bye. He had never lett the girl's bedside, but looked less anxious than he had done the previous night.
"I don't fear for her life," he said. "She won't die-but I doubt if she will ever be

able to dance again. Her legs are so fearfully burnt there will probably be a contraction of some of the sinews. * A pity-isn't it?"
"Poor creature! " " But your own hands are badly burnt, I see,"

"Oh! That's nothing. And I don't depend on my hands, you see—she does, upon her legs." He laughed lightly, as if he cared nothing. I would not take the taste of that characteristic speech out of my mouth.

And so, with a hand laid on each of his shoulders, since my hand might not grasp his, we parted. The pity of it! I have never seen him since. He was often in my thoughts, during the two months I was absent from Carro, and the first thing I did, on my return, was to go in search of him. My disappointment was great to learn at his earavansary that he

had left Cairo; more they could not tell me. I was resolved to discover, if possible, where he had gone, and why; since he had given me to understand he would remain here for some weeks longer. I bethought me of his patient, the poor burnt ballerina; it was possible she might know what had become of him. But on applying at her room, I found that she, also, had departed with her mother; still suffering and lame, they told me, but able to crawl about with a stick. I was giving it up in despair, not unmixed with resentment at his treatment of me, when, on going to my banker's, a letter was placed in my hands, the superscription on which I at once recognized as being Sigismund's. I torgot money, and everything else; I sat down in

the office, and read the following: "Farewell, my friend. Circumstances over which I have no control, as your penny-aliners say, are driving me forth with my wallet on my back, once more to the land of the lily and the rose. I would wait to shake your hand-one of the few I ever wish to shake-again, but this dancing girl and her mother must be at Teheran by a certain date; and I go with them. The girl can't walk yet, you see, and depends

"I had a spaniel once, who broke his | Truth. was only a seifish gratification, devoid of would not be the foolisher for them, as I | real benevolence; but the dog, not discriminating between motives, became devoted to me. I put on sackeloth when it died. So may it chance to be with this girl -who knows! "Allah is great! May you prosper till we meet again, wheresoever that may be.

OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

"SIGISMUND,"

The Nile has a fall of only six inches in one thousand miles. Condors have been killed in Peru with wings of forty feet spread.

The farmer in Japan who has ten acres of land is looked upon as a monopolist. The largest trees are in Australia, some exceeding over four hundred feet in height. In 1850 there was one criminal in 3,500 of

our population, but in 1890 there was one in 786.5, a tremendous increase in forty years. The city assessor of Lowell, Mass., has announced that he will hereafter assess the three thousand bicycles owned in that

The drummers of the Austrian army have been armed with the regulation rifle. This adds 4,904 available tighting men to

One-cent pieces are being introduced in Oakland, Cal., for the first time. The amaliest legal tender formerly used was five-cent pieces. Baron Liebig, the German chemist, says that as much flower as will lie on the point

Sir John Herschel says that if a solid cylinder of ice forty-five miles in diameter and 200,000 miles long were plunged end first into the sun it would melt in a second

of a table knife contains as much nutritive

constituents as eight pints of the best beer

The bottle from which Generals Sherman and Johnston took a drink at the time of the latter's surrender is claimed to be owned by a Mrs. Jones, of Raleigh, North Spanish Hebrews always pour out all

the water contained in the vessels of a house wherein a person has died, fearing that the angel of death may have washed his sword in some of it. There are 241 academies of music in the United States, and 363 grand opera houses in cities having over 8,000 population.

Over 400 theaters in the United States are named after their proprietors. A belt recently made for the Brooklyn City Electric Railway Company is 116 feet long, seventy-two inches wide and weighs 1,800 pounds. One hundred and twenty hides were used in its manufacture. It is said that when Benjamin Franklin

proposed to start a newspaper his mother

tried to dissuade him from it because, she said, there were already two papers in America and there was no room for A stream of water from a nozzle with a diameter any place between six and nine inches, with the surface of the source of

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as it is made as impervious as a bar of little bill as quick as it comes in, you don't tempered steel by the enormous pressure resting upon it.

In Queen's county, Ireland, right in the center of a level tract of country, there stands a single rock in solitary grandeur. It is the rock of Dunamasse, covered from base to summit with the ruins of an ancient fortress.

The flagstaff upon which the first secession flag was hoisted in South Carolina, when the State seceded in 1860, is still standing. It is fastsped with iron cuffs to the gable end of an old storehouse at Skull Shoals postoffice.

A pair of kid button shoes were made complete and packed in a Lynn factory the other day in fifteen minutes and forty-five seconds. The previous record was twenty-four minutes. Of course they will be shown at the world's fair. A mare owned by Herman Colby, of San-

born, N. H., recently gave birth to triplets. Two of the foals were about the size of kittens, and the third perfectly formed and of normal size. The mare was bred to a Percheron stallion weighing 1,600 pounds. It is getting to be the fashion to address and stamp envelopes on the back. With

the direction written across the folds, the letter cannot be opened by an unauthorized person without the fact being detected, and such an opportunity is made very difficult. New York is the only State that allows an uncle to marry his niece. In Florida and Georg', marriage is prohibited within the "Levitical degrees;" these are set forth in Leviticus xviii, and forbid marriages

of nephews and aunts, but seemingly not of nucles with nieces, No European country considers such a marriage lawful. The Bon Marche in Paris is said to employ 100 men who do nothing but watch for shoplifters. This one establishment alone arrests from 12,000 to 15,000 people annually who have been caught stealing. Probably if 30,000 or 40,000 more who don't get caught

are added an idea can be formed of the way kleptomania flourishes in France. The most curious of all class journals is surely the Beggars' Journal, of Paris, which is published daily, and gives its subscribers a complete list of baptisms, wed-dings and funerals to take place the same day. Begging letter writers are provided for by a special section, which gives the arrivals and departures of persons of known charitable tendencies.

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

Want to Redeem Themselves. Atlanta Constitution. "I see one of the magazines published a good poem this month? "Yes: they're trying to compete with the

newspapers now.' Chance for Doubt, New York Weekly. She (gushingly)-Will you love me when

He-Love you! I shall idolize-um-er You are not going to look like your mother, are you! Almost a Hint. Texas Siftings.

"Bring me a cup of coffee and something to read," said a New York man who is re-"How would the bill of fare do?" replied the waiter, handing over the menu. Woman's Judgment.

leg-and it amused me to nurse it. It Mr. Perte-I can't see how it is that I always lose at the races, while you win. Mrs. Perte-You would win if you followed my advice. I told you to bet on the jockey with the pink jacket and old gold

Unaccountable Change in Public Life.

Editor-I don't see why our paper doesn't sell as well as it used to. Publisher-No more do I. Are the jokes different from what we used to print. Editor-No, indeed. They're identically the same.

No Need of Prayer, New York Weekly.

Deacon Ebony-I hab not seen you at ough reviverl meetin's, Mistah Black. Mistah Black-Wat foh I want ob reviverl meetin's? "Don't you ebber pray?"

"No, I carry er rabbit's foot. How It Turned Out.

Wash ngton Star. "So Bankster married his typewriter operator?"

"And she doesn't do any more work?" "It didn't turn out that way. She simply doesn't draw any more salary."

A Fearful Threat. Mrs. Jones-Haven't you heard from the President yet about the office?

Mr. Jones-No. I think he has gone back Mrs. Jones-Well, we will give him one more week and if he doesn't appoint you to something we will change this baby's name from Grover Cleveland to Dave Hill.

Losing Faith in Editors.

New York Weekly. Old Lady-I don't believe this Sure Cure Tonic is a-goin' to do me any good. Friend-It's highly spoken of in the pa-

Old Lady-Yes, but I've taken forty-seven bottles, and I don't feel a bit better. tell you what it is, Sarah, I'm beginning to thing these newspaper editors don's know everything.

The Merit of the Case. Anxious Mother-Why don't you drive

that bad boy away from your play-ground? Good Little Boy-It wouldn't be right. "Wouldn't it?" "No'm. You see that play-ground is pub-"Oh, so it 18."

"Yes'm; and it would be sort o' selfish and dishonest to deprive any other boy of the right to go there.' "So it would, my angel. I didn't think "Yes'm; and, besides, he can lick me."

Just Like a Man.

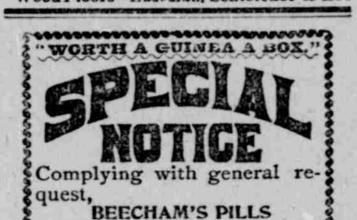
New York Weekly.

Mrs. Stocks-If we move into that cheap house we'll lose caste. Mr. Stocks-Don't care if we do: it's the best we can afford without running hopelessly into debt, and, besides, it's a comfortable place anyhow. Mrs. Stocks-Hun! Just like a man. Only

care what the world thinks. Helpful buggestion. Chicago Tribune.

"By the way," inquired the young woman with the bundles, turning back for a moment, "do you till mail orders?" "1-I think not, Miss," replied the new salesman, somewnat nesitatingly. matrimonial agency is in the next block

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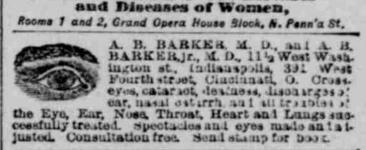
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